

WILKINSBURG BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETING
Work Session
February 20, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Marcinko advised Council that a motion could be made to appoint the Finance Chairperson to preside over the meeting with the absence of President Cohn (work commitment) and Vice President McCarthy-Johnson and given that there is no Chairperson pro tem.

A motion was made by Ms. Ervin, second by Ms. Evans, to have Mr. Lefebvre preside over the meeting.

All voted in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

Councilman Michael Lefebvre called the meeting to order at approximately 6:37 PM in Council Chambers, second floor of the Municipal Building, 605 Ross Ave., Wilkinsburg, PA.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson arrived.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called to establish a quorum. Council members present were: Mr. Lefebvre, Ms. Ervin, Ms. Evans, Ms. Trice, Ms. McCarthy-Johnson, and Ms. Macklin. Marla P. Marcinko, Borough Manager was also present. Ms. Moore, Ms. Goodman, President Cohn and Mayor John Thompson were absent. A quorum was established.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Following the pledge of allegiance, a moment of silence was observed to remember victims of violent crime.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Willie Sanders, Constable – Stated that he is responsible for transporting prisoners from Wilkinsburg and he would like to acquire one of the surplus police vehicles. Ms. Marcinko explained the State requirements for disposing of Borough property. Ms. Marcinko advised that Council had recently taken action to authorize the use of Muncibid for disposal of Borough property.

Ms. Macklin questioned the benefit of transporting prisoners in a police vehicle. Mr. Sanders responded that they are equipped with a bench seat and cage. Mr. Sanders

believes a police vehicle is safer for transporting prisoners. Ms. Macklin asked about liability for prisoner escape. Mr. Sanders stated that the Pennsylvania State Constable Office is the responsible party. Mr. Sanders' colleague suggested that the vehicle could be sold to the PA State Constable Office. Ms. Marcinko will check with the Solicitor to determine if this is an eligible agency under the PA Borough Code.

Vice-President McCarthy-Johnson turned the meeting over to Mr. Lefebvre, Chairperson of Finance.

FINANCE

1. Review of 2012 year-end financial reports.

Mr. Lefebvre referred to the 2012 financial reports distributed to Council. Mr. Egler, Finance Director, cautioned that the figures contained therein are pre-audit figures and he is about 98% to final 2012 figures. Mr. Egler highlighted key financial trends for 2012 as compared to 2011. Specifically current real estate, earned income tax, and business privilege tax.

Ms. Macklin commented that it appears the Borough is bringing in approximately \$270,000 per mill. She commented on the increase in earned income tax collection which equated to roughly 1.3 mills. Ms. Macklin questioned the decrease in revenue from parking fines. Mr. Egler explained the trends with collection of parking fines and the benefit of having a scofflaw list. Mr. Egler explained that after receiving 5 or more parking tickets which are at least 30 days old, the police department has the authority to boot the owner's vehicle or have it towed. Vehicle owners are responsible to pay the towing fee and garages charge about \$30.00 a day for vehicle storage. The parking fines must be paid at the Finance Department before the vehicle would be released.

2. Comparison of 2012 budget to actuals.

Ms. Macklin questioned street restoration following utility cuts. Most of the restoration is only temporary at this time. Final restoration will take place in the spring.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson asked about sidewalk repairs. It was suggested that any concerns be relayed to Sean Gramz, Code Enforcement Director.

Ms. Macklin asked about building permits fees and the reduced revenue of about 50% from 2011. She also commented on the loss of revenue from tenant registration in the amount of \$17,000. She inquired as to the reason that the forms were not sent out last year. Mr. Egler explained there had been issues with data in 2012 and the Land Management System. He explained that progress has since been made. Ms. Marcinko commented that the most likely reason for the loss in building permit fee revenue was due to the PHLF projects, specifically the Crescent and Wilson buildings, which were issued in 2011.

Ms. Macklin commented that delinquent Municipal Services Fees were lower than budgeted amounts. Mr. Egler will forward the 2011 and 2012 figures which were sent over to PLA for collection to Ms. Macklin.

Ms. Macklin questioned the sale of equipment (fire engine), purchase of equipment and the transfer for repayment of funds borrowed from the Sewer Fund to pay a legal settlement. Ms. Marcinko explained there is a breakdown in the budget that explains the various costs. Ms. Macklin asked if there are outstanding loans owed to the Sewer Fund. Ms. Marcinko responded that the funds are being repaid over a 10-year period - \$17,500 annually.

Mr. Egler stated that the budget for fire protection services was under budget in 2011 as only 3 payments had to be made as opposed to 4.

Mr. Egler commented that overtime costs for the Police Department seem to be lower and better managed. DPW costs are also down as well as legal costs. Mr. Egler stated he was pleased with the manner in which departments are controlling their budgets.

Ms. Macklin asked about dues and memberships in General Government, deferred compensation, telephone costs and miscellaneous bank fees (credit card usage). Mr. Egler attributed the increase in bank fees to the fact that more permits are being issued in Code and most are paying by credit card. The charges reflect vendor charges to the Borough for providing the service. It is an advantage to the Borough to accept payments by credit card as monies may not otherwise be collected.

Ms. Macklin questioned the expenditures for settlements and computer hardware support. Mr. Egler will look into the breakdowns for hardware and software support and review with Mr. McAfee.

Ms. Macklin expressed concerns regarding certain professional services and the need to raise the level of expectation of these professionals.

Ms. Macklin questioned whether the Borough had explored alternate energy suppliers. She also asked if there had been a reduction in the number of school crossing guards. Ms. Macklin questioned whether there was a different process employed for allocating Workers' Compensation costs as they were up in the Police Department and DPW. Radios and maintenance costs were also up.

Ms. Marcinko explained that the payment schedule for fire protection was revised and lowered for 2012 over what was budgeted due to several adjustments as a result of the adjusted cost of the rescue pumper.

Ms. Macklin asked if the Code Enforcement Department is using the hand-held tablets for ticketing and if the data uploads to the system from the field. Ms. Marcinko advised that to be the case.

Costs for contracted services for DPW and contracted services for storm sewers were up over prior year. Mr. Egler will review and provide a response.

Ms. Macklin questioned the budgeting for the fire pension bond principle and interest. Ms. Marcinko explained that the amounts budgeted to Series C reflect the credit the Borough received back which was not reflected as lower costs paid in the budget. This method had been requested by Ms. Macklin during the budget process in 2011.

3. Update to Management Response to 2011 Management Letter.

Ms. Marcinko stated that this matter is deferred to March 20, 2013.

4. Update on delinquent tax collection RFP.

Mr. Lefebvre commented that a summary was provided in the agenda packet. Ms. Marcinko offered to answer questions. Ms. Macklin inquired as to the basis for the development of the RFP given that one does not currently exist. Ms. Marcinko advised that the current agreement with Portnoff Law Associates would provide the basis for the services requested. Ms. Trice questioned whether the Borough would be responsible for legal fees and costs if the agreement is terminated. Ms. Marcinko advised that the matter is under review by the Solicitor. The term was reviewed and the Solicitor concurred that it is December, 2013.

5. Update on Tenant Registration Process.

A summary was provided in the agenda packet and Council had no further questions.

6. Update on Business Privilege Tax Collection.

Ms. Macklin questioned whether Berkheimer Tax Services was contracted to do more than send out a bill for collection. The contract with Berheimer Tax Services stipulates that the agency will conduct research to increase accounts. Ms. Macklin suggested a meeting with Berkheimer. Ms. Marcinko expressed disappointment with the lack of responsiveness. A system has been initiated for reporting tenants and new property owners to Keystone Collections for earned income tax and rental properties to Berkheimer for business privilege tax. Ms. Ervin asked if payments for prior years can be sought. An attempt will be made to collect prior year balances which may be owed. Ms. Marcinko commented that a letter is being sent, by the Borough and school district solicitor, to Section 8 voucher landlord recipients who are delinquent in payment of property taxes. After responses are received, the Borough will send correspondence to the County to follow-up. Ms. Macklin asked for a sample copy of the letter.

7. Update on PILOT effort.

Ms. Marcinko contacted CONNECT, at the suggestion of Ms. Evans, and spoke with CONNECT's Executive Director who identified an individual to work as an intern for

this project. An update will be provided to Ms. Marcinko. A revised PILOT letter will be matched with envelopes already on file and mailed. There are ninety non-profit tax-exempt properties in the Borough. Ms. Macklin asked to include, as part of the job responsibility for the proposed intern, to physically check the property address for occupancy.

Ms. McCarthy-Johnson reported a UNIS Demolition truck consistently drives up Mill Street against the one-way restriction.

Ms. Ervin asked if bids were received for renovation of the Police Department. A pre-bid meeting was held last week. Bids are mostly advertised in the Tribune Review. Ms. Marcinko informed Council the Borough Engineer has the advertisement information.

Donated furniture has been distributed to the departments that chose what they needed.

Ms. Macklin commented about a problem with cash receipting on invoices through LMS. Mr. Egler explained the problem has been resolved. Mr. Egler will consult with Mr. Gramz for an update.

Ms. Macklin commented on the Chief's report of new protocols for dealing with domestic violence cases established by the DA's office.

Ms. Macklin commented about an increase in properties found that are being inhabited without utility services.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, on motion by Mr. Lefebvre, second by Ms. Ervin, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15 PM.

Vanessa McCarthy-Johnson, Council Vice-President